

Message Text

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ORIGIN NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 AF-08 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 PM-04 NSC-05
SP-02 SS-15 H-02 SSM-05 OC-06 CCO-00 SSO-00
SIG-02 MMO-04 L-03 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00
PA-02 PRS-01 NSCE-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 /102 R

DRAFTED BY NEA/P:EOJONES:DP
APPROVED BY NEA/P:GFSHERMAN
S/PRS - MR. CARTER (INFO)
H - MR. FLATEN (INFO)
SSM - MR. MC ANDREW
NEA - MS. CULLUMS
NEA/ARN - MR. DRAPER
NEA/IAI - MR. SMITH
NEA/EGY - MR. NEWBERRY
NEA/ARP - MR. TWINAM

-----240207Z 066655 /20

O 232329Z MAR 77
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY AMMAN IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY CAIRO IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY JIDDA IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI
AMEMBASSY ALGIERS
USINT BAGHDAD
AMEMBASSY DOHA
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
AMEMBASSY MANAMA
AMEMBASSY RABAT
AMEMBASSY SANA
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI
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AMEMBASSY TUNIS
USMISSION SINAI
AMCONSUL DHAHRAN
USMISSION GENEVA
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
USMISSION NATO
AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY ROME
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
USCINCEUR

UNCLAS STATE 064937

CINCEUR FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR

SUBJECT: DEPARTMENT PRESS BRIEFING - MARCH 23

1. FOR YOUR INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE, FOLLOWING ARE
EXCERPTS FROM DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN'S PRESS BRIEFING FOR
MARCH 23, 1977:

Q. ARE YOU IN A POSITION TO COMMENT AT ALL ON THE SO-CALL-
ED CLARIFICATIONS THAT HAVE BEEN GIVEN TO THE ISRAELIS ABO-
UT THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION'S POSITION ON THE ARAB-ISRAELI
SETTLEMENT?

A. WELL, MR. BRZEZINSKI, AS I UNDERSTAND IT, HAS ALREADY
ADDRESSED THIS REPORT LAST NIGHT AND LABELED THE PORTIONS
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RELATING TO HIM AS A PURE FICTION. I THINK THAT WAS
REPORTED AT SOME LENGTH LAST NIGHT AND EARLY THIS MORNING.
I DON'T HAVE ANYTHING TO ADD TO THAT, MURREY.

Q. WHAT ABOUT THE PORTIONS NOT RELATED TO HIM?

A. I AM SORRY. REPEAT YOUR QUESTION.

Q. WHAT ABOUT THE PORTIONS NOT RELATING TO BRZEZINSKI?

A. WELL, LET'S PUT IT THIS WAY. I CAN'T ELABORATE ON
WHAT WAS SAID IN GENERAL AS A REACTION TO THE REPORTS
APPEARING YESTERDAY EVENING.

Q. CAN YOU TELL US WHAT THE U.S. GOVERNMENT POSITION IS
ON WHERE THE BOUNDARIES OR WHERE THE LEGAL BORDERS OF ISRAEL
MIGHT LIE IN ANY FUTURE SETTLEMENT?

A. WELL, HENRY, OUR POSITION IS THAT WE ARE NOT IN THE
BUSINESS OF DRAWING MIDDLE EAST BORDERS. I THINK THAT
HAS BEEN SAID BEFORE.

THE TERRITORIAL ISSUES, LIKE THE OTHER KEY ISSUES IN THIS
CONFLICT, MUST BE SETTLED THROUGH NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN THE

PARTIES AND WE ARE NOT GOING TO PREJUDGE THE OUTCOME OF THESE NEGOTIATIONS.

THAT REMAINS OUR POSITION.

Q. CAN YOU DISTINGUISH FOR US BETWEEN LEGAL BORDERS AND DEFENSIBLE BORDERS, WHAT THE DIFFERENCE IS?

A. I WOULDN'T WANT TO GET INTO THAT.

Q. WHAT ABOUT THE FUNDAMENTAL QUESTION, FRED? HAS THE PRESIDENT BEEN TELLING MIDDLE EAST AMBASSADORS AND MIDDLE UNCLASSIFIED

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EAST DIPLOMATS WHAT HIS VIEWS ON WHAT THE BORDERS SHOULD BE?

A. I REALLY DON'T KNOW THE DETAILS OF WHAT THE PRESIDENT HAS SAID TO MIDDLE EAST AMBASSADORS IN HIS PRIVATE DISCUSSIONS WITH THEM, DICK, TO BE PERFECTLY HONEST WITH YOU.

Q. WHAT WOULD YOU SAY IS THE UNITED STATES POSITION AT THIS POINT ON WHETHER A HOMELAND FOR PALESTINIANS SHOULD BE LOCATED IN JORDANIAN JURISDICTION?

A. MURREY, I AM AFRAID I HAVE GOT TO SIMPLY RELY ON WHAT THE PRESIDENT HAS SAID MOST RECENTLY ON THAT AS THE AUTHORITATIVE STATEMENT OF OUR VIEW. I SIMPLY CANNOT INTERPRET IT FOR YOU OR GIVE YOU ANOTHER FORMULATION OF IT.

Q. WHICH STATEMENT WERE YOU REFERRING TO, THE ONE HE MADE AT CLINTON OR THE ONE HE MADE BETWEEN CLINTON AND --

A. CLINTON AND SUBSEQUENTLY. THAT IS THE FORMULATION.

Q. BECAUSE, AS YOU KNOW, BETWEEN CLINTON AND NEW YORK HE SAID IT COULD BE IN JORDAN OR BY ANOTHER MEANS.

A. WELL, THAT IS THE STATE OF PLAY AND I THINK HE ALSO SAID THAT IT IS UP TO THE PARTIES INVOLVED TO DECIDE AND THIS, I THINK, IS THE KEY THING TO BEAR IN MIND.

Q. EXCUSE ME, FRED. YOU SAY FROM CLINTON ONWARD? I MEAN, BECAUSE A WEEK EARLIER HE HAD A PRESS CONFERENCE IN WHICH HE ELABORATED AT LENGTH ON THE MIDDLE EAST AND NOW YOU SAY --

A. THE QUESTION WAS POSED TO ME IN TERMS OF THE HOMELAND AND NOT -- UNCLASSIFIED

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Q. OH. EXCUSE ME.

A. -- WAS THE FORMULATION USED AT CLINTON AND THEN THERE WERE ONE OR TWO REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT THE NEXT DAY IN AMPLIFICATION OF THAT. SO THAT, WE ARE SPEAKING STRICTLY ABOUT THAT PARTICULAR ASPECT OF THE PRESIDENT'S REMARKS.

Q. BUT WHEN YOU ARE TALKING ABOUT THE GENERAL U.S. POLICY IN THE MIDDLE EAST YOU INCLUDE ALL THE PRESIDENTIAL PRONOUNCEMENT IN THAT.

A. WELL, I HAVE GIVEN YOU IN MOST GENERAL TERMS IN REPLY TO MR. BRADSHER'S QUESTION ON HOW WE VIEW THE MIDDLE EAST PROCESS AND WHAT OUR MOST GENERAL CONFIGURATION WOULD BE AND HOW WE VIEW IT AND THAT IS AS I HAVE JUST GIVEN YOU.

Q. JUST FOR THE RECORD, FRED, --

A. YES.

Q. -- HOW DO YOU JUSTIFY -- WE WENT THROUGH THIS, I GUESS, TWO WEEKS AGO --

A. YES.

Q. BUT, WHEN YOU SAY THAT THE AMERICAN POSITION IS THAT IT IS UP TO THE PARTIES TO DETERMINE THE ISSUES, SUCH AS

THE FINAL BORDERS, WHERE DOES THE PRESIDENT'S REMARKS FIT INTO THIS WHERE HE SAID HE THOUGHT THAT THERE SHOULD ONLY BE MINOR ADJUSTMENTS IN THE FINAL BORDERS?

IS THE PRESIDENT JUST TALKING INTO THE BLUE?

I MEAN THE TWO COMMENTS DON'T SEEM TO JELL VERY WELL. WE UNCLASSIFIED

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TALKED ABOUT THIS TWO WEEKS AGO AND WE DIDN'T GET ANY- WHERE EITHER.

Q. DON'T PREJUDGE.

A. I REALLY DON'T THINK I CAN TRY TO INTERPRET WHAT THE PRESIDENT SAID BEYOND WHAT HE HAS GIVEN US VERY RECENTLY. I WOULDN'T PRESUME TO DO THAT.

Q. BUT THERE ARE PEOPLE IN THE ADMINISTRATION WHO ARE QUALIFIED TO DO THAT; AREN'T THERE?

A. WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

Q. I MEAN THE PRESIDENT HAS ADVISORS WHO DO INTERPRET SOME OF HIS STATEMENTS WITH SOME AUTHORITY.

A. I THINK WE OUGHT TO GET OUT OF THE BUSINESS OF TRYING TO, YOU KNOW, PUT ME IN A POSITION OF TRYING TO INTERPRET WHAT THE PRESIDENT SAID BECAUSE I AM NOT GOING TO DO THAT.

Q. NO. I AM JUST TRYING TO HELP YOU, AS A MATTER OF FACT. YOU ARE NOT GOING TO STAND THERE AND SAY THAT WHEN THE PRESIDENT MAKES A STATEMENT THAT IS THE BEGINNING AND THE END.

A. NO. IT IS HIS EXPRESSION OF WHAT OUR POLICY AND OUR OFFICIAL POSITION IS AND, YOU KNOW, I AM NOT TRYING TO RECONCILE WHAT MAY BE IMPROVISATIONS IN OTHER PEOPLE'S MINDS, SO TO SPEAK. I REALLY CAN'T GET INTO THAT KIND OF THING.

2. FOR YOUR INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE THE FOLLOWING ARE EXCERPTS FROM THE WHITE HOUSE PRESS BRIEFING ON MARCH 22:

Q. I WOULD LIKE TO GO BACK TO THE BREZHNEV SPEECH AND UNCLASSIFIED

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TWO QUESTIONS ON THE MIDDLE EAST. UNLESS I HAVE GOTTEN MY SPEECHES CONFUSED -- AND THAT COULD BE -- BREZHNEV'S SPEECH ALSO INCLUDED QUITE AN EXTENSIVE AND DETAILED DISCUSSION OF THE OUTLINES OF THE SETTLEMENT IN THE MIDDLE EAST.

MR. POWELL: YES.

Q. I HAVE TWO QUESTIONS ABOUT THAT. THE FIRST IS A SIMPLE ONE AND THE SECOND IS A LITTLE MORE COMPLICATED.

MR. POWELL: LET ME SAY I AM NOT GOING TO COMMENT ON THOSE THINGS IN DETAIL. I THINK STATE HAS COMMENTED TO SOME EXTENT ON THEM, PROBABLY IN MORE DETAIL THAN I WILL BE ABLE TO. BUT I WILL BE GLAD TO.

Q. MY FIRST QUESTION IS WHETHER YOU, THE PRESIDENT, OR THE WHITE HOUSE HAS A REACTION?

MR. POWELL: WE DO NOTE THOSE COMMENTS WITH INTEREST AND THE MIDDLE EAST IS INDEED AN AREA IN WHICH WE FEEL THAT THERE IS A PROSPECT FOR SERIOUS NEGOTIATIONS.

Q. MY SECOND QUESTION ON IT IS A LITTLE MORE COMPLICATED. IT APPEARED TO SOME PEOPLE THAT BREZHNEV GAVE GREATER ASSURANCES TO ISRAEL AND EXHIBITED GREATER CONCERN FOR ISRAEL'S SURVIVAL AND CONTINUED EXISTENCE THAN HE EVER

HAD BEFORE; THAT HE WENT CONSIDERABLY FURTHER THAN THE
OFFICIAL RUSSIAN POLICY STATEMENTS HAVE EVER GONE.

MY QUESTION IS THIS: THERE SEEMS TO BE A FEELING THAT THE
PRESIDENT'S DISCUSSION OF THIS ISSUE, PARTICULARLY AT HIS
LAST PRESS CONFERENCE, WHERE THERE WAS DISCUSSION OF WITH-
DRAWAL OF PRE-1967 BOUNDARIES, AND SO FORTH, IS LIKELY TO
BE TREATED WITH CONSIDERABLE TREPIDATION AND ANXIETY IN
ISRAEL, AND HAS BEEN. IS THERE ANY CONSIDERATION BEING
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GIVEN OR ANY DISCUSSION OR ANY FEELING IN THIS ADMINIS-
TRATION THAT THE SOVIETS MIGHT EXPLOIT THIS, MIGHT BE
PREPARING TO EXPLOIT, PARTICULARLY IN THE LIGHT OF THE
BREZHNEV STATEMENTS, ISRAELI TREPIDATIONS AND ISRAELI FEAR
ABOUT OUR POSITION AND IN EFFECT MOVE IN AND BEGIN TO
IMPROVE THEIR RELATIONS WITH ISRAEL AND OCCUPY A VACUUM
THERE CREATED BY THE DIMINUTION, LET'S SAY, OF OUR
SUPPORT FOR ISRAEL?

MR. POWELL: I TAKE STRONG EXCEPTION TO YOUR STATEMENT
THAT THERE HAS BEEN ANY DIMINUTION IN OUR SUPPORT FOR
ISRAEL OR THAT A VACUUM INDEED EXISTS. WE WOULD CER-
TAINLY WELCOME ACTION ON THE PART OF THE SOVIET UNION THAT
POINTS TOWARD SUPPORT FOR ISRAEL'S RIGHT TO EXIST AND
EXIST IN PEACE.

Q. NOT TO SUPPORT BUT TO GAIN INFLUENCE IN ISRAEL.

MR. POWELL: BASICALLY, I DON'T THINK WE ARE AT THE
POINT WHERE -- IT IS A DIFFICULT QUESTION TO ANSWER.
I DON'T KNOW HOW TO ANSWER A QUESTION ABOUT WHETHER I
THINK THEY WILL SUPPORT, WHETHER WE ARE WORRIED ABOUT
THEM EXPLOITING A VACUUM WHICH, IN MY OPINION, DOES NOT
EXIST.

Q. I AM NOT SAYING IT DOES. I AM SPEAKING WITH REFER-
ENCE TO WHAT BREZHNEV HAD TO SAY.

MR. POWELL: WITHOUT ACCEPTING ANY OF YOUR PREMISES, NO,
WE ARE NOT WORRIED ABOUT THE SOVIETS.

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<< END OF DOCUMENT >>

Message Attributes

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